# Bay-Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP)
# Steering Committee Meeting

Friday, November 17, 2006, 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 p.m.
Draft Meeting Notes

## Action Items

- T. Quinn to look into establishing a covered activities subgroup.
- R. Strach to compile a preliminary list of scientific questions to be answered by the future science advisors. Send suggested questions to Russ at russ.strach@noaa.gov.

## 1. Introductions/Updates

- See attached list for meeting attendees.
- National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) signed the planning agreement; others are in the process of being submitted.
- The 2007 schedule and workplan are currently being developed and will be distributed soon.

## 2. Recommendation of the Consultant Selection Committee

The Steering Committee met in a closed session to discuss consultant selection. The Steering Committee accepted the recommendation of the Selection Committee. Consultants will be notified this afternoon about the results.

## 3. Covered Activities Discussion (informational only)

The Steering Committee continued its discussion about covered activities. The discussion covered whether levees should be included under the BDCP, how the BDCP will overlap and coordinate with DWR's levee work, how the BDCP will benefit from the recently approved Proposition 1E, and how the BDCP will overlap and coordinate with the re-consultation on OCAP. It was agreed that levees will not be included as a covered activity. No other decisions were made today, but all agreed that it is important to keep this discussion in the forefront of Steering Committee's agenda. The Steering Committee likely will be establishing a covered activities subcommittee in January to help sift through these issues and propose recommendations.

## 4. Science Discussion (informational only)

To help the Steering Committee design its independent science advisory process, representatives from two similar efforts gave presentations on how their science process is structured.

South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project, presented by Steve Richie

The South Bay Salt Restoration Project is led by the Coastal Conservancy, along with the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The management team includes representatives from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Santa Clara Valley Water District, Alameda County Flood Control District, and a lead scientist. The project also receives significant funding from private donors.

The primary focus of this project's science is to ensure that the salt pond restoration project is scientifically sound and publicly accepted. S. Richie emphasized the importance of remaining flexible in the scientific approach, because the outcome is not always what you originally expected. Their approach is a combination of asking a science panel specific questions and requesting general scientific advice. The science process is broken up into four different levels:

1. *A local science team.* This group consists of scientists who are familiar with the local study area. They are charged with listing the fundamental uncertainties of the project—the top three of which are mercury contamination, sediment dynamics, and the balance of habitat. To address these uncertainties, the local science team developed 21 applied studies questions that form the basis of the project's scientific research. This team meets roughly every 2 months.

2. *A national science panel.* This group consists of scientists chosen nationwide from a broad range of expertise. This team is charged with looking at the "big picture" science. The group met five times over the 3-year planning period and will meet less often as the project progresses.

3. *A lead scientist on the management team.* This person has a formal seat on the management team and serves as the bridge between the science team and management.

4. *A long-term science management team.* This group collects information and provides advice, similar to CALFED's Science Program. This team is engaged by all three of the above levels.

This project engages a facilitator for its stakeholder group, but all of the science teams discussed above are self-managed. The facilitator serves as the bridge between the stakeholder group and the science teams and promotes an open exchange of information between the two groups. This open process was appreciated by the stakeholder group.

For more information, visit: http://www.southbayrestoration.org/

Yolo County Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Communities Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP), presented by Maria Wong

The Yolo County HCP/NCCP is headed by a joint powers authority (JPA) made up of Yolo County and its four incorporated cities, with U.C. Davis as an *ex officio* member. This effort is a re-start HCP/NCCP that is underpinned by science, economics, and public policy. In the first phase, science was a highly contentious component that remained unresolved when the effort restarted. In the re-start, the JPA aimed for a process that would provide unbiased scientific opinion to the project, while at the same time not overpowering entire process. To achieve this, a

working group (made up of Maria Wong and DFG and USFWS representatives) established the following process:

1. The group first chose a lead scientist. The lead scientist was engaged 3 to 4 months prior to selecting the science advisors and helped determine the scope of work and the limitations and boundaries of the group.

2. Next, the group devised a vetting process for choosing the science advisors. This process was designed to include a broad perspective on an ecosystem level (not just specific species) and included both local and out-of-state scientists pulled from academia, public agencies, and private practice. M. Wong emphasized that having such a broad list to choose from strengthened their science process.

3. Finally, the working group established their steering committee as the gatekeeper for all questions. The steering committee posed their questions to the lead scientist, and the lead scientist then decided which questions to bring forward to the science advisors. These questions focused primarily on global issues about the plan, rather than specific details like impacts of a particular activity.

The scientific process was headed by the lead scientist, followed by a second scientist (chosen by the lead). A facilitator provided editing, meeting coordination, and facilitation.

A key element of the scientific process was the JPA's ability to preview the science advisors' recommendations prior to going public. This allowed the JPA to refine the document and clean it up before public review. M. Wong emphasized the importance of engaging a technical writer in this part of the process.

The science advisors were not constrained by cost or feasibility issues, in part to address a perception that the original HCP/NCCP science was limited. The next step will be for the JPA to review the science advisors' recommendations and determine what is feasible given the available resources.

For more information, visit: http://www.city.davis.ca.us/yolohabitatjpa/

## 6. Public Comment

K. Scarborough received an email comment from the Planning Conservation League (PCL). No other comments were received.

## 7. Next Meeting

The next meetings are scheduled for December 15, 2006, and January 19, 2007.